

March 28, 2008

Member of the California State Legislature
C/O Assemblymember Jim Beall, Jr.
California State Capitol
Room 5016
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Legislator:

I am writing to support Assembly Bill 2337 (Beall). AB 2337 would add alcohol and drug abuse counselors to the list of health professional required to report child abuse. The bill promotes safety and security for children in peril and minimizes liability exposure for counselors wanting to safeguard children.

Substance abuse is found to be evident in over two-thirds of all child abuse and domestic violence cases. Yet the front line treatment professionals -- alcoholism and drug abuse counselors -- are not required to report suspected child abuse. All other professional categories working with families in crisis are required to report because no child should be left in a dangerous environment.

Immediate intervention for families in violent environments speeds the help they may need with issues of substance abuse. A teamwork approach involving addiction treatment and social services has been shown to be the most effective method to long term recovery.

The changes made by AB 2337 do not create any new programs or costly bureaucracies but simply places addiction counselors in the same safety net as Boy Scout leaders, teachers, daycare providers, fire fighters and all medical and mental health providers. Once categorized by law as a mandated reporter, addiction counselors would be protected from liability claims because their actions are compelled by statute.

AB 2337 safeguards children at risk of abuse, reduces counselors' liability exposure, promotes recovery and has no state costs. For all of these reasons, I urge you to vote yes for AB 2237.

Best regards,

Name
Address